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Three CHS Faculty Receive Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Funding Awards

April 12, 2007

College of Health Sciences' faculty received two Impact Awards, each for \$450,000, from the Healthier Wisconsin Partnership.

Paula M. Rhyner, PhD, Professor, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Timothy Patrick, PhD, Professor, Department of Health Sciences, received an award for their project "Early Childhood Integrated Database System (ECIDS): Implementation and Education."

The second award was given to Ann Snyder, PhD, Professor, Department of Human Movement Sciences, for the, "Healthy Latino Families: A Nutrition/Exercise Program to Reduce Obesity" project.



The Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program is a component of the endowment fund at the Medical College of Wisconsin and supports the vision to improve the health of the people of Wisconsin. The Partnership Program encourages collaborative community-medical school partnerships that address public and community health improvement.

Funded projects all build upon "Healthiest Wisconsin 2010" (the state health plan) and strive for maximum impact on the health of the people of Wisconsin by deliberately focusing on the greatest state or local needs. The projects aim to effect systemic change by emphasizing prevention, innovation and capacity-building.

The "Early Childhood Integrated Database System (ECIDS)" project (together with community partners Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, City of Milwaukee Health Department and Milwaukee Center for Independence) will focus on the implementation and evaluation of an integrated database system for young children with disabilities in Milwaukee County.

This project addresses the need for improved collection, storage and sharing of information about young children with disabilities. This can help facilitate their access to primary and preventive services, promote their improved identification and enhance the coordination of care and case management.

The ECIDS will include a central database, an online referral tool, a case management tool, an Individual Family Service Plan tool and outcome measurement and reporting tools for early intervention programs in Milwaukee County and the state of Wisconsin.

Service providers and client families from selected early intervention programs will participate in ECIDS implementation and provide feedback for evaluation, which will focus on data collection and data reporting. Team leaders will also work closely with the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to ensure system compatibility and security.

The proposed impact award project will improve the delivery of early intervention services for young children with disabilities in Milwaukee County by (1) allowing for accurate/reliable determination of prevalence and rate trends for children with DD; (2) fostering efficient, integrated service delivery for these children; (3) facilitating the tracking of successes, costs and benefits of these services; and (4) supporting evaluation and improvement of services.

The second project, "Healthy Latino Families: A Nutrition/Exercise Program to Reduce Obesity," in partnership with the United Community Center, will work with students and parents at Milwaukee's Bruce Guadalupe Charter Middle School (BGMS.) It has been established that at least 27% of this predominantly Latino school are currently at risk for obesity. To help prevent overweight in these children, it will be critical to establish healthy behaviors within the context of their most important referents--the family and school.

The goal is to modify the middle school meal program to be healthier and infuse more physical activity and targeted health education messages into the curriculum. A family-based early evening education program will help children and parents incorporate these changes into their lives.

The short-term aim of this program is to help BGMS children and their families adopt and maintain healthy eating and school- and family-oriented physical activities to prevent overweight over the course of an 11-month school year. The longer-term goal is to help sustain these behaviors and prevent overweight among BGMS children and use this as a model program for other Latino schools.

The project will modify the school meal program to be healthier (healthy Latino cuisine) and infuse more physical activity and targeted health education messages into the current curriculum. A short program will inform school staff about the program objectives and solicit input about ways to make effective changes in the school.

The UWM College of Health Sciences offers the largest number of health-related degree programs in Wisconsin, training its graduates for high-demand careers. Many of the College's six undergraduate and seven graduate degree programs are nationally recognized and have achieved the highest accreditation awards possible. The College's faculty conducts state-of-the-art research attracting a record number of federal research grants. During its 31-year history, the College's research and health sciences education has contributed significantly to improving quality of life.

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